

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7741

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 2539

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINR, CE

SUBJ: NEW SRI LANKA PRIME MINISTER

1. SRI LANKA'S NEW PRIME MINISTER, 70-YEAR OLD JUNIUS RICHARD JAYEWARDENE, IS A MAN WHOSE TOTAL CAREER HAS BEEN DEVOTED TO POLITICS. AFTER THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS IN THE ELECTORAL AREAN, J. R. HAS FINALLY EARNED SUPREME POWER. THAT IT WAS EARNED, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT. HIS REPUTATION FOR THOROUGH ORGANIZATION, HARD WORK, AND POLITICAL ASTUTENESS IS MORE THAN BORNE OUT BY THE SMOOTH AND EFFECTIVE OPERATION OF THE CAMPAIGN WHICH BROUGHT THE OVERWHELMING ELECTION VICTORY OF THE UNP. HIS FOLLOWERS, TO WHOM HE IS "THE LEADER", SHOWER HIM WITH PRAISE FOR HIS PERSONAL DISCIPLINE, KEEN SENSE OF MORALITY, AND TOUGHNESS (OR WHAT HIS OPPONENTS CALL URTHLESSNESS). NO ONE HAS EVER SUGGESTED, HOWEVER, THAT HE IS ENDOWED WITH GREAT PERSONAL CHARM OR WARMTH. HIS IMAGE IS OF AN ALOOF, UNSMILING AUTHORITY FIGURE. HE IS CERTAINLY NOT OF THE "PRESS THE FLESH" STYLE OF POLITICIAN. HIS FOLLOWERS PREFER INSTEAD TO KEEP HIM ON A PEDESTAL AND AT A RESPECTED DISTANCE. HIS AUSTERE COSTUME OF "NATIONAL DRESS" (WHILE SHIRT AND SARONG) INVITES COMPARISON WITH MORARJI DESAI OF INDIA, AND, INDEED, HE HAS BENEFITTED FROM A SIMILAR IMAGE. (HE DOES NOT SMOKE OR DRINK, CONFIDENTIAL

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ALTHOUGH HE APPARENTLY HAS NO SPECIAL DIETARY HABITS.)

2. HIS POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY IS DIFFICULT TO PIN DOWN. HE IS CRITICIZED BY OPPONENTS AS PRO-WESTERN "WHENCE HIS NICK-NAME "YANKEE DICKIE") BUT HIS MIGHT BE MORE A FUNCTION OF HIS DISTRUST TOWARD COMMUNISM (ONE FACTOR, PERHAPS, IN HIS CAMPAIGN ATTACK ON THE SOVIET EMBASSY) THAN ANY UNCRITICAL AD-

MIRATION OF THE U.S. ECONOMIC SYSTEM. HE HAS FOR SOME TIME  
ADVOCATED A FORM OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM. AIDED BY THE PRE-  
SSURE BOTH OF EVENTS AND OF THE YOUTH IN THE UNP HE HAS  
BROUGHT MUCH OF THE PARTY HIERARCHY AROUND TO THE MORE STATIST  
ECONOMIC VIEWPOINT THAT IS TODAY THE SINE QUA NON OF SRI LANKA  
POLITICS. HE HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE ACCEPTS THE SOCIAL  
AND ECONOMIC REFORMS, INCLUDING LAND REFORM, OF THE PREVIOUS  
GOVERNMENT.

3. PARTICULARLY IN THE EARLY YEARS OF INDEPENDENT CEYLON,  
J.R. WORKED PERIODICALLY ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE IS PROUD OF  
HIS CO-AUTHORSHIP OF THE COLOMBO PLAN AND WAS A GOVERNOR OF  
THE WORLD BANK AND IMF IN THE EARLY 1950'S. HE REPRESENTED  
CEYLON AT THE ALGERIA UNCTAD CONFERENCE IN 1967 AND TRAVELLED  
EXTENSIVELY ON GOVERNMENT MISSIONS.

4. ALTHOUGH HE HAS HAD PARTY CRITICS, THE PROMINENT CONES  
HAVE BEEN FORCED OUT OF THE UNP; DISLOYALTY TO J.R. BY RUKMAN  
SENANAYAKE, EX-PRIME MINISTER DUDLEY SENANAYAKE'S NEPHEW AND  
POLITICAL HEIR WAS PUNISHED BY EXPULSION FROM THE PARTY.  
J.R. HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY QUICK TO STAMP OUT ANY CLIQUES  
THREATENING HIS LEADERSHIP.

5. PERSONAL DATA: BORN SEPTEMBER 17, 1906, J.R. IS OF THE  
GOYIGAMA CASTE, AND THUS OF ACCEPTABLY HIGH BIRTH TO BECOME  
PRIME MINISTER. ALTHOUGH BAPTIZED AS AN ANGLICAN, HE LATER  
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BECAME BUDDHIST. HIS EDUCATION WAS AT ROYAL COLLEGE AND THE  
CEYLON LAW COLLEGE, BOTH IN COLOMBO. UNLIKE OTHERS OF HIS  
GENERATION FROM WEALTHY BACKGROUNDS, HE AND OTHERS IN HIS  
FAMILY DID NOT ATTEND UNIVERSITY IN ENGLAND, A FACT IN WHICH  
THEY TAKE QUIET PRIDE.

6. IN THE 1930'S HE MARRIED ELINA RUPASINGHE, REPORTEDLY A  
RATHER QUIET WOMAN. THEY HAD ONLY ONE CHILD, RAVI, WHO AFTER  
MARRIAGE AND THREE CHILDREN, FAST LIVING, DIVORCE, AND CAREERS  
AS A BUSINESSMAN, PILOT AND CAPTAIN IN THE CEYLON ARMY VOL-  
UNTEERS, ENTERED THE BUDDHIST MONKHOOD IN THAILAND. EARLIER THIS  
YEAR HE LEFT THE MONASTERY AND MARRIED A BURGHER (ANGLO-CEY-  
LONESE) FORMER AIR HOSTESS PENNY WHITE; THEY NOW LIVE IN  
AUSTRALIA.

7. AMONG J.R.'S SEVEN BROTHERS AND SISTERS, MOSTLY PRO-  
FESSIONAL PEOPLE, ARE HARRY W. JAYEWARDENE, PRESIDENT OF  
SRI LANKA'S BAR ASSOCIATION, R. P. JAYEWARDENE, A MEMBER OF  
THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF CARDIOLOGISTS, AND IONE, WIFE OF THE  
LATE N. W. AUTHUKORALE, FORMER COUNSELOR IN THE SRI LANKA EM-  
BASSY IN WASHINGTON. ALTHOUGH A TALENTED AND FAIRLY LARGE  
FAMILY, IT DOES NOT APPEAR LIKELY TO BE EMPLOYED AS PROMINENTLY

IN GOVERNMENT JOBS AS WAS THE EXTENDED RATWATTE CLAN OF HIS  
PREDECESSOR SIRIMAVO BANDARANAIKE (NEE RATWATTE).

8. THE JAYEWARDENE FAMILY IS WEALTHY, AND HAS BUSINESS  
INTERESTS IN TEXTILES (ASIAN COTTON MILLS) AND JOURNALISM  
(SHARES IN NOW GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED LAKE HOUSE, FOUNDED BYN  
J.R.'S MATERNAL GRANDFATHER).

9. POLITICAL CAREER: 1940 - ELECTED TO COLOMBO MUNICIPAL  
COUNCIL; 1943 - ELECTED TO STATE COUNCIL; 1947 - ELECTED TO  
PARLIAMENT; 1947-53 - MINISTER OF FINANCE; 1953-56 - MINISTER  
OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD; 1956 - DEFEATED IN BANDARANAIKE LAND-  
SLIDE; 1960 - ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT; 1960-65 - DEPUTY LEADER  
OF THE OPPOSITION; 1965-70 - MINISTER OF STATE, DEPUTY MINI-  
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STER OF DEFENCE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS; 1970-77, LEADER OF  
THE OPPOSITION.  
PERKINS

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## Message Attributes

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